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UNCLAS MANAGUA 001438

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR INL/LA, INL/RM AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SNAR NU KJUS
SUBJECT: MANAGUA INL REPORT FOR OCT-MAR, FY 2006

¶11. (U) Summary: Over the last six months, INL supported Nicaraguan Navy and Police operations have resulted in substantial seizures and arrests. According to DEA statistics, 9.3 kilos of heroin, 1,538.6 kilos of cocaine and 52 kilos of marijuana were seized. Nicaraguan authorities arrested 41 people in conjunction with the seizures. INL Managua also provided training to law enforcement officials and supported anti-corruption activities.

¶12. (SBU) Highlights:

-- December 17, 2005: The Nicaraguan National Police (NNP) seized 809 kilograms of cocaine and arrested 6 subjects. The NNP seized the cocaine from vehicles along the Chinandega-Corinto highway. The cocaine was brought in by boat to the Port of Corinto and then loaded into the vehicles. The NNP successfully apprehended the captain of the boat and seized the boat and communication equipment used by the drug traffickers. (Comment: This seizure is also significant because it occurred on the Pacific Coast, which may indicate a shift in routes by drug traffickers. Drugs are traditionally moved up the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua by boat or overland from the Costa Rican border.)

-- December 17-20: INL funded a DEA-supported NNP operation which involved deploying NNP teams to the Nicaraguan borders with Costa Rica and Honduras and the Managua airport in order to deter the flow of drugs overland through Nicaragua. The NNP focused on "blind spots" along the Nicaraguan border with Costa Rica, which officers stationed permanently at the border are unable to cover. The operation resulted in a few small seizures and arrests, but more importantly, it shifted drug trafficking patterns and deterred the use of traditional routes. The operation also resulted in better intelligence and information on the methods and routes used along the border.

-- February 22: The NNP seized over 500 kilograms of cocaine at the Penas Blancas vehicle inspection station. The NNP pulled over a suspicious vehicle as it crossed the border from Costa Rica. The drugs were discovered in a 20-foot long steel bridge girder hidden under scrap metal, oil filters, and dirt to mask the scent of the drugs -- which was so effective that the K-9s did not alert on the drugs until the girder had been taken apart. The vehicle was apparently headed to Guatemala. (Comment: Post is funding urgently needed repairs at Penas Blancas to improve working conditions and officers' effectiveness in detecting contraband.)

¶13. (U) INL supported NNP anti-narcotic activities:

-- INL Managua funded three deployments monthly of the NNP's Mobile Interdiction and K-9 units.

-- INL Managua supported the deployment of the Nicaraguan

National Police Chemical Precursor Inspection Unit (CPIU) for 4 and 5 day operations for two months.

-- We sponsored the trip of an NNP officer to San Diego, CA to coordinate with DEA and regional counterparts on an ongoing narcotics case.

-- INL sponsored the travel of two NNP officers to Costa Rica to coordinate investigative efforts into an organizations shipping cocaine from Costa Rica to Guatemala via Nicaragua.

-- INL funds funded basic maintenance at Penas Blancas and repairs to NNP equipment.

14. (U) Training:

-- The NNP Deputy Chief of Police attended an FBI Retrainer Conference in Panama City Oct. 16 - 21.

-- INL sponsored an NNP Police officer to attend an anti-gang conference in El Salvador in November.

-- Six NNP officers attended training in Costa Rica on vehicle inspection techniques, sponsored by INL.

-- INL sponsored NNP officers to attend a mini-IDECS and IDECs (International Drug Enforcement Conference) in Latin America.

15. (U) Naval program:

-- The second Dabur refurbishment was completed and repairs are set to begin on the third boat.

-- We provided over USD 20,000 in spare parts to the Nicaraguan Navy for maintenance of their fast boat fleet.

16. (U) Anti-corruption activities (with Post's Resident Legal Advisor):

-- INL sponsored the Nicaraguan Attorney General's trip to El Salvador to meet with a DOJ representative and attorney generals from other Central America countries and discuss pending corruption cases in the region.

-- Post held the annual 'Mini Dublin' meeting and used the opportunity to promote discussion among donor nations on anti-corruption programs.

-- INL sent two NNP officers to Panama City for a Money Laundering Conference.

17. (U) Demand Reduction:

-- INL provided funds to the OAS for a Culture of Lawfulness program in Nicaragua. The first training sessions for teachers may begin in July and August.

-- DARE materials were translated into the Miskito language and we are planning to print additional materials in Spanish and English to be used on the Atlantic coast.

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